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RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1957.

Index numbers of retail prices for the September quarter of 1957 (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1957.

City.	Aggregate All Groups.			All Groups, excluding Price Movements in Potatoes and Onions.		
	Index Number.	Increase[a] from-		Index Number.	Increase[a] from-	
		Sept. Qtr., 1956.	June Qtr., 1957.		Sept. Qtr., 1956.	June Qtr., 1957.
		%	%		%	%
Brisbane ..	2343	-1.1	0.3	2362	3.3	0.6
Toowoomba	2363	-1.7	-0.4	2385	2.8	-0.0
Rockhampton	2372	-0.8	-0.1	2392	3.1	0.3
Townsville	2452	-1.0	-0.7	2482	3.2	0.4
Bundaberg	2329	0.1	-0.3	2347	4.4	0.2
Warwick ..	2326	-1.3	0.0	2338	2.8	0.3

a Minus (-) indicates decrease.

The "C" Series index number for Brisbane for September quarter, 1957, was 1.1 per cent. lower than it was twelve months earlier. This was the first occasion for twelve years on which the index showed a fall over a twelve-months period. The decrease was, however, due to a steep fall in potato prices which had reached their highest level ever in September quarter of 1956, with an average price of 9s. 8d. for 7 lbs. compared with the latest quarter's price of 3s. 1d. A better indication of the true movement of retail prices is obtained after removing from the index number the disturbing effect of the erratic movements of potato and onion prices. On this basis, prices in Brisbane in the last quarter rose by 0.6 per cent. while the increase over the whole preceding twelve-months period was 3.3 per cent. Very similar rises were recorded during the twelve months in the other cities for which information is available, the highest rise being 4.4 per cent. in Bundaberg and the lowest 2.8 per cent. in Toowoomba and Warwick.

In the latest quarter, food and grocery prices, after the exclusion of the effect of potatoes and onions, showed small rises of 0.3 per cent. in Brisbane and Rockhampton. In Toowoomba there was a slight decrease while there was practically no change in the other three cities.

Clothing and footwear prices and prices of miscellaneous items showed very small rises, their increases for Brisbane in the September quarter, 1957, being respectively 0.4 and 0.6 per cent. These were the smallest quarterly increases for these sections of the index for over a year. No marked variation from these movements was shown in any of the five provincial cities included in the collection.

Changes in sections of the index are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases[a], September Quarter, 1957.

City.	Food and Groceries.			Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1957.		From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1957.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1957.
	A	A	B				
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	207.4	-0.4	0.3	293.1	0.4	139.3	0.6
Toowoomba ..	226.0	-1.5	-0.6	297.8	0.3	138.4	0.6
Rockhampton	194.7	-0.9	0.3	239.7	0.2	146.6	0.8
Townsville	185.7	-2.4	0.1	290.1	0.2	149.9	0.6
Bundaberg ..	195.1	-1.2	0.0	295.7	0.3	137.4	0.6
Warwick ..	218.9	-0.4	0.1	294.9	0.3	144.2	0.7

a Minus (-) indicates decrease.

Note: A includes, and B excludes, price movements due to potatoes and onions.

Food and Groceries.

The food and grocery section (including potatoes and onions) decreased in all cities, the decrease being greatest in Townsville and least in Warwick and Brisbane. All cities showed considerably decreased quarterly average prices for potatoes, onions, eggs, and tea. In marked contrast with the corresponding quarter of last year, when potato prices reached a record high, potato and onion prices continued to fall, and, with the harvesting of the new season's potato crop in North Queensland, the downward movement was by far the most noticeable in Townsville.

Partially offsetting these decreases in all cities was the general price rise in meat (operating for only one month of the quarter), and, to a much lesser extent, prices increased for jam and canned and dried fruits.

Clothing and Footwear.

Although there was a very gradual upward price movement in some clothing items, including men's socks and women's shoes, this section of the index remained particularly stable in all cities, the rise during the quarter ranging from only 0.2 per cent. in Rockhampton and Townsville to 0.4 per cent. in Brisbane.

Miscellaneous.

This group also showed only a slight upward movement in all cities. There were small increases in gas prices in Rockhampton and Brisbane, and firewood in Warwick.

Rent (4 and 5 roomed houses).

This index increased in Brisbane (1.5 per cent.) and Townsville (1.0 per cent.), but remained unchanged elsewhere.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in September quarter, 1957, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Groups.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	2	1	0	2		19	$3\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	$2\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	7
Rockhampton	1	0	3	1	0	$0\frac{3}{4}$		19	11	1	0	$2\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	$11\frac{1}{2}$
Townsville	1	0	$11\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	$8\frac{3}{4}$	1	2	$4\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	$1\frac{1}{4}$	1	1	$10\frac{3}{4}$
Bundaberg ..		19	$10\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	3		15	$9\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	$4\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	8
Warwick ..		19	$10\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	6		14	5	1	0	0	1	1	6

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

The Commonwealth industrial authority suspended automatic ("cost of living") adjustments after the adjustment which operated from the beginning of the first pay-period in August, 1953. Since that date, adjustments to the basic wages have been made from time to time, often on special applications, both by the Commonwealth and State industrial authorities. Particulars of such adjustments have been given in previous issues of this bulletin. At present, the New South Wales basic wage alone is being varied automatically with movements of the index numbers, but no change occurred there for the September quarter, 1957. Commonwealth and State basic wages for other capital cities also remained unchanged, and details of relative price levels and current basic wage rates are given in the following table.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.

Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index.				Commonwealth Basic Wage.			State Basic Wage.						
	June Quarter, 1957.		Sept. Quarter, 1957.		Males.[a]			Males.			Females.			Date of Operation.[b]
	A	B	A	B	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Brisbane	2337	2349	2343	2362	11	18	0	12	1	0	8	2	6	29. 7. 57
Sydney ..	2618	2611	2622	2628	13	3	0	13	10	0	10	2	6	Aug., 1957
Melbourne	2573	2558	2568	2567	12	15	0	13	3	0	9	17	0	Aug., 1956c
Adelaide	2470	2466	2485	2492	12	11	0	12	11	0	9	8	0	20. 5. 57
Perth ..	2750	2746	2746	2741	12	16	0	13	12	9	8	17	3	19. 7. 57
Hobart ..	2707	2704	2681	2699	13	2	0	13	12	0	10	4	0	Aug., 1956c

Note: A includes, and B excludes, price movements due to potatoes and onions.

a Operative first pay-period beginning on or after 1st May, 1957. The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

b Where dates are not quoted wage rates operate from beginning of first pay-period in month shown.

c No State wage is actually declared. The rate fixed by the Commonwealth Court was usually followed until August, 1953. For later adjustments, see above.

S. E. SOLOMON,
GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

BRISBANE.

14th November, 1957.

The "C" Series Retail Price Index.

(Base for Each Section: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927= 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1957.	Year Ended Sept., 1957.	Quarter Ended - Sept., 1956.	Dec., 1956.	March, 1957.	June, 1957.	Sept., 1957.
1. Aggregate - All Groups.								
Brisbane	863	2341	2334	2370	2335	2321	2337	2343
Toowoomba ..	851	2379	2369	2404	2382	2358	2373	2363
Rockhampton ..	861	2374	2369	2392	2370	2360	2374	2372
Townsville ..	912	2460	2453	2478	2444	2447	2469	2452
Bundaberg ..	841	2321	2321	2326	2317	2304	2335	2329
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	864	2353	2346	2380	2347	2334	2351	2353
Warwick	822	2329	2321	2357	2332	2300	2325	2326
2. All Groups EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a).								
Brisbane	863	2318	2337	2287	2305	2330	2349	2362
Toowoomba ..	851	2357	2373	2320	2348	2372	2386	2385
Rockhampton ..	861	2352	2370	2319	2341	2364	2384	2392
Townsville ..	912	2439	2458	2406	2421	2454	2473	2482
Bundaberg ..	841	2295	2320	2249	2279	2311	2342	2347
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	864	2330	2349	2298	2317	2343	2362	2373
Warwick	822	2302	2318	2274	2293	2311	2331	2338
3. Food and Groceries.								
Brisbane	856	2709	2654	2853	2711	2631	2641	2631
Toowoomba ..	814	2777	2714	2905	2801	2705	2695	2654
Rockhampton ..	895	2707	2663	2814	2708	2644	2661	2638
Townsville ..	955	2829	2775	2946	2812	2764	2794	2728
Bundaberg ..	903	2735	2691	2843	2748	2652	2697	2665
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	864	2722	2668	2859	2725	2646	2658	2641
Warwick	846	2762	2711	2901	2778	2659	2709	2698
4. Food and Groceries EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a).								
Brisbane	856	2646	2661	2624	2628	2655	2675	2684
Toowoomba ..	814	2712	2722	2673	2705	2743	2728	2713
Rockhampton ..	895	2640	2661	2606	2620	2649	2683	2691
Townsville ..	955	2768	2783	2743	2745	2779	2803	2805
Bundaberg ..	903	2660	2682	2625	2637	2669	2710	2711
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	864	2658	2673	2634	2640	2669	2688	2695
Warwick	846	2687	2702	2667	2669	2687	2725	2727
5. Clothing and Footwear.								
Brisbane	829	3204	3230	3155	3192	3225	3245	3259
Toowoomba ..	829	3233	3263	3176	3214	3252	3289	3298
Rockhampton ..	845	3237	3268	3166	3228	3267	3285	3293
Townsville ..	840	3235	3259	3183	3226	3262	3269	3277
Bundaberg ..	839	3239	3276	3170	3223	3252	3309	3320
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	831	3212	3239	3160	3199	3234	3254	3267
Warwick	825	3207	3232	3159	3190	3231	3248	3258

(a) Excluded as from September quarter, 1955.